

Make a Natural Miniature Christmas Tree

By Anne Gerdes



Materials & Supplies Needed:



- Dark green dried "Caspia" - available where dried florals are sold - depending on the quality and size of your bundle, you will need 1-2 bundles per 8" - 10" tree.
- 2 - 3" Round Wooden Disk for base - available at craft stores
- 12" - 16" Bamboo Skewer - like the kind used for barbeque shishkabobs
- Florist Foam brick
- Dark green spray paint (same color as Caspia - I like florist paints, available at craft stores like Michael's, and florist supply stores)
- Tacky Glue
- Small, sharp knife
- Cheap, strong-hold hairspray
- Electric hand drill

Instructions

Drill a hole through the center of your wooden disk big enough for a bamboo skewer to fit snugly. Make sure you drill straight down - put a block of scrap wood under to drill into. Cut a skewer to about 3 inches shorter than your desired finished tree height. Be sure to cut excess length from the non-pointed end - you will want that sharp end later. Put some glue on the cut end and push into the base hole. Make sure it is standing straight up, and that it isn't poking out underneath. You want the base to sit flat. Let glue set.

With your sharp knife, cut a 1 inch square rectangle from on long edge of your florist foam brick. You will need it to be about 2 inches shorter than your desired finished height. If you are making a very tall tree, you may need to cut two pieces and stack them.

Cover the skewer with tacky glue and carefully push the pointed end up through the foam piece from one end. Go slowly. If you get "off track" and poke out a side, just pull it back out, add more glue if needed, and re-insert.

With your knife, sculpt the foam trunk. You want to shave off the corners and slowly make it more rounded, tapering as you go so it is narrower on the top.

Spray paint the trunk and base and let dry.

If you look carefully at your Caspia, you will see there are sections that are shaped in a triangular way and look like miniature pine tree branches. Some will be flat (my favorites), and some will be more wedge-shaped. I tend to be pretty picky selecting which portions I will use. Some are too thin and "branchy." I end up throwing a lot away, or saving it for "bare trees."

Work from the bottom up. You will be breaking off, adding glue to the broken ends, and inserting them in to the trunk one at a time. Squeeze some glue into an old prescription bottle lid, and dip your branch end in as you go. Do one full circle of the trunk before moving up to the next "level." Stagger them, like a brick pattern, so the next branch above is pointing out centered above the "v" shaped gap between two branches below. Your bottom branches should be about 2 1/4 - 2 1/2" long, and you will gradually shorten them as you go up, to create the cone shape of the tree. I usually jump to the top about halfway up, and then fill in from both ends. Save some of your prettiest for your tree top -- which will be stuck straight down from the top. The branches around the top (think flower petal formation here) will be about 1 inch long, and less flat - more wedge shaped. Note: If you plan to decorate the tree for Christmas, you can strengthen the tree for the top ornament with a toothpick painted the same dark green.

When you are done, spray the whole tree with hairspray. This will strengthen it, and help get rid of the chemical smell from the dry plant preservatives.

Optional: spray with white florist spray paint lightly, aiming down from above, to simulate snow. You can also spray with spray glitter, over the white.

After trying my tutorial, Donna contacted me and gave me permission to share her easier version. ~Anne Gerdes

Easy Alternative Version by Donna Worth



- 1 bottle brush tree, size your choice (craft store)
- dried Caspia
- super glue gel or tacky glue
- hairspray



Sort the dried Caspia into size groups. The sizes you will need depend on the size of the tree you are working with. Larger pieces for the bottom, etc. You don't want the Caspia sticking too far out of the bottle brush tree, maybe 1/4 inch or less. Test the first couple of pieces to make sure you have the size you want before gluing. Start at the bottom of the tree, spread the bottle brush "limbs" put a dab of glue on the end of Caspia and insert into tree up to the trunk. Continue around the tree and up to the top. When you are done, spray the whole tree with hairspray. This will strengthen it, and help get rid of the chemical smell from the dry plant preservatives.

You now have a tree Santa would be proud to sit by!